

Peter M. Hill
The Australian National University

Reference

Hill, Peter (1976): 'Lexical Revolutions as an Expression of Nationalism in the Balkans', *Melbourne Slavonic Studies* IX/X: 121–128

Victor Dönninghaus, *Die Deutschen in der Moskauer Gesellschaft — Symbiose und Konflikte (1494–1941)* [The Germans in Moscow Society: Symbiosis and Conflicts (1494–1941)]. München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2002, 576 pp.

On May 28, 1915 an unidentified agitator addressed a crowd of Muscovite rioters in the following incendiary terms: 'We have to stop treating the Germans with kid gloves, when the smallest infraction suffices to banish the Russian[s] to the region of Narym, whence there is no return, and when even in confinement Germans live better than we — death to the Germans! Beat the Germans and all who cover up for them!' (pp. 402–403 — my translation from the German). Thousands of Muscovites answered the call to action with aggressive enthusiasm. How could it have come to this? How could ethnic Russians from all walks of life have come to perceive the assimilated and economically highly productive minority in their midst as the 'inner enemy'? Victor Dönninghaus' detailed investigation of the Germans in Moscow society spanning more than four centuries attempts to answer this question.

Professor Dönninghaus begins his survey with an all too brief overview of the early years of the foreign settlement in Moscow founded in the reign of Ivan III (1462–1505). What started out as a modest venture — a handful of indigent Germans trying to carve out a living in the Russian capital — gradually acquired more remarkable proportions. Although never more than 2.01% of Moscow's population, the predominantly Lutheran German minority came to occupy an economic position wholly disproportionate to its negligible number. For the most part well-educated and prosperous members of the Muscovite elite (in marked contrast to the Volga Germans whom Dönninghaus has investi-

gated elsewhere), Moscow Germans walked a tightrope between eager cultural assimilation and proud adherence to their national heritage.

Section four titled 'The Moscow Germans and the First World War' forms the book's centrepiece. Containing a thorough investigation of what might be called the anatomy of a pogrom, it provides a valuable lesson in the breakdown of a cultural 'symbiosis', to employ the perhaps not wholly felicitous term from the subtitle. Suspicion and discrimination culminated in the infamous anti-German pogrom of May 1915, a three-day orgy of looting, physical abuse, and destruction that resulted in the death of five persons and massive damage to German businesses. Encouraged by the obvious apathy of the police who generally contented itself with observing the mayhem from a safe distance, the rioters gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to go on a rampage. Their attitude, incidentally, was mirrored by the more refined but scarcely more inhibited pronouncements of Count Yusupov, the man famous for his part in Rasputin's murder, who wholeheartedly endorsed a program of ethnic cleansing.

Let us listen to the musings of the Russian writer Rashel Mironovna Chin-Goldovskaya (1863–1928) who witnessed the pogrom herself and commented on the fact that Count Yusupov within a single week "overwhelmed" all German civilians in Moscow: '. . . and 500 persons [were] deported without consideration of sex, age, and health. Of course it is good that the Germans experience first-hand [*am eigenen Leibe*] the situation of the Jews . . .'

 (p. 476). Not only were the Germans (many of whom were Russian citizens) faced with boycotts and forced to close down their churches and associations; Yusupov also bluntly contemplated the establishment of a concentration camp for Germans, 'somewhere on an island beyond the Volga' (p. 476). Such ominous notes carry the tinge of unpleasant familiarity.

Considering the author's dual aim as stated in the preface — to provide a general history of the German community in Moscow with particular emphasis on its economic and cultural contributions to the city's development, and to investigate the 'daily life' of the German population within the troublesome dialectic of 'Russia and the West' (p. 11) — the study, though undeniably well-researched and copiously annotated, cannot be called an unqualified success. While Dönninghaus has spared no effort in the gathering of sources — many of them archival and never used before — he falls short in interpreting the implica-

tions of his findings within the larger context of Russian and general European history. To treat the history of a small minority such as the Germans of Moscow as an isolated enclave is to ignore larger trends and patterns. *Die Deutschen in der Moskauer Gesellschaft* thus fails to draw the obvious conclusion, namely that no ethnic minority, no matter how well adjusted and acculturated, is secure from bigotry and persecution in times of violent upheaval. Anyone acquainted with nineteenth-century Russian literature and its abundance of less than flattering German stereotypes should be less surprised at this than the complete novice.

To be sure, Dönninghaus does not address the novice. The book presupposes a solid understanding of the basics of modern Russian history and is thus recommended mainly for the specialist and for college and university libraries. Though repetitive and excessively attentive to detail, Dönninghaus' style is accessible, occasionally even lucid. On account of its narrow focus, however, it is perhaps best read in conjunction with a work of somewhat broader scope such as Alfred Eisfeld's *Die Russlanddeutschen* (1999). Whatever the book's shortcomings (not the least of which is the lack of an index), *Die Deutschen in der Moskauer Gesellschaft* fulfils one of the primary demands of good historiography: it inspires confidence in the author's abilities and scholarly integrity.

Susanne Hillman

University of California San Diego

E. Thomas Ewing, *The Teachers of Stalinism: Policy, Practice and Power in Soviet Schools of the 1930s*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. xiv + 333 pp.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent throwing open of hitherto inaccessible archives to scholars, both Russian and Western, a more nuanced reading of aspects of sensitive areas of Soviet history and culture has become possible. This has been evinced by the excellent analyses by scholars such as Sheila Fitzpatrick (*Everyday Stalinism, Stalin's Peasants, Stalinism: New Directions*), who have availed them-